

EDUCATIONAL COLUMN.

All communications intended for this column should be addressed to J. B. P. Holloway, Esq., who has kindly consented to edit it.

Spelling.

Will some practical teacher give us a method by which pupils may become good spellers? We all use Webster's blue-backed spelling books, but is the child any better speller after having completed this study than before? We stand up before an array of open mouths two or three times daily, and give out long columns of words, short or long, according to the capacity or age of the mouths, but is the pupil any wiser? This is a tedious process, and it seems its age entitles it to use, but we are no little disgusted with it. Our idea is that a child should be made to spell what it reads. Besides the words usually found at the close of every reading exercise, let the scholar spell every unusual word in the lesson. Don't let spelling be considered a separate study. Spell words in your geography, grammar, history, philosophy, or whatever it may be. Most of our little fellows can rattle off "p-u-b-l-i-c-a-t-i-o-n," "con-ec-t-a-tion" and the like with the pertness of parrots. These words have no more meaning to these children than so much Hebrew or Chinese. Then, we want to know, why spend time in vain repetitions? Why memorize a set of huge words the lad will never use? It seems to us the part of reason that the pupil's vocabulary should be enlarged gradually by dealing with those words which arise in his daily studies. Again, another excellent plan is to put them to writing words as soon as their advancement warrants it. Use the slate freely and frequently. Make them write out words in their lessons. How ridiculous does the spelling even of some good talkers appear when their thoughts are put on paper! Therefore, let the boy or girl use his slate as often as he pleases. They not only learn spelling, this way, but grammar, punctuation, the use of capitals and other good things. Bacon never uttered a truer thought than when he said: "Conversation makes a ready man; reading, a full man; but writing, an exact man." Train the pupil to look closely, and our word for it, the number of good spellers will be considerably increased. Nothing so mars the composition of a lady or gentleman as bad spelling. Then, we urge upon our teachers the necessity of stringent exertions towards raking good spellers out of their pupils.

The following communication from a successful teacher asks a few questions which she desires to be answered by some one through the column. Throw away your diffidence and let us hear from you:

"There are a few questions which I would like to ask, and they are as follows: How to get all the scholars of a school interested in the cause of education, and keep them so? What must be done to cure indifference? I have seen scholars so indifferent that when explanations were made, it appeared to the teacher as casting 'pearls before swine.' I loudly advocate the education of the heart, and the issues therefrom will be pure and right, although the mind must be trained, or the results will not be so beneficial. I find it very hard to introduce the text-books, as parents seem to think the same books will do I have thirty scholars, and have two grammar classes, two English composition, three geography, one history three arithmetic, and then they dwindle down to the famous 'blue-back' speller! How far is it necessary to go in grammar? And why do you not parse more in your column? Where is the subject in this sentence, 'On conditions suitable to his rank.'"

The great drawback to the success of our common schools especially in this country is the want of uniformity in text books. A pupil is often put to studying some branch by one teacher, when his successor deems him unfit for it, and he does not take it up, but makes a substitute, thus incurring an additional expense upon the parent. Thus a great deal of time is needlessly wasted. You will very often find in some of our country districts several different text-books on the same branch in use in the same school. This is certainly very annoying to the teacher, and he should set to work immediately upon his assuming control of the school to establish a curriculum for his school, and let the Board of Trustees make it obligatory on every teacher to follow said curriculum. It's the only way to build up first-class high schools.

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St. Matthews, September 6, 1876.

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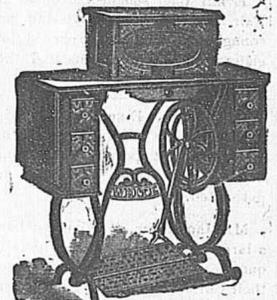
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